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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Liberal International (World Liberal Union), a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 February 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Protection of Human Rights in Areas of Conflict: Cases of Highest International Priority

Liberal International (LI) welcomes the recent informal remarks delivered by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to the UN General Assembly marking the 10 year anniversary since the establishment of the Responsibility to Protect Principle. LI fully aligns with the UN Secretary-General's conclusions that "in too many crises the international community has been unable to act on early warning signs and has failed to match rhetoric with responses."

LI also welcomes the recent adoption of the "Framework of Analysis for the Prevention of Atrocity Crimes" as established by the offices of Adama Dieng, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Jennifer Welsh, Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect. The promotion of sensible human rights policies on a regional, national and international level lies at the heart of Liberal International's human rights agenda and as such the organisation will continue to work with liberal parties in government and opposition in strengthening human rights standards around the world.

This statement would like to pay particular attention to the ever-growing number of human rights violations putting a particular emphasis on the need to strengthen the global response to atrocity crimes.

Recognizing that:

-In the Syrian Arab Republic President Assad's troops continue to massacre their own people along with jihadist organisations such as Da-esh resulting in the death of more than 100,000 people, 7. 6 million internally displaced people and over 3.6 million refugees with further potential for the destabilization of the entire region

-The dangerous expansion of the terrorist group Da-esh in Syria and Iraq as well as the increased involvement of foreign trained jihadist fighters in Syria has brought a completely new dimension of terror and horror to the people of Syria and the immediate region changing completely the scale and scope of the on-going conflict

-In Nigeria there is an on-going humanitarian crisis caused by the indiscriminate targeting of vulnerable and minority groups by fighters of the extremist group Boko Haram which has resulted in more than 30,000 casualties year to date

-According to the Nigerian Social Violence dataset Nigerian casualties are now running more than double those in Afghanistan, and substantially higher than in Iraq just a few years ago precisely due to the escalation in Boko Haram attacks

-Since April 2014, pro-Russian separatists aided by the Russian Federation have been battling Ukrainian forces in the eastern regions of the country following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea resulting in more than 4000 casualties' year to date

-The actions of the Russian Federation and in particular the military occupation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea constitute a grave violation of international law, including of the UN Charter and the OSCE Helsinki Final Act, as well as the Budapest memorandum ensuring the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine signed between Russia, the US, and the UK in 1994

-The on-going civil unrest in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela might soon spin out of control with the latest decision of the government to adopt a military tactics law permitting the use of potentially lethal force against civilians during public gatherings and demonstrations and thus leading to further massive violations of Human Rights in the country

Expressing deep concern:

-Of the systematic abductions, sexual enslavements, and killings of children belonging to religious and ethnic minorities by Da-esh in Iraq and Syria

-That there is a general lack of shelter, medicine and educational facilities in refugee camps

-Girls and women are particularly vulnerable and there is no psychological help for victims of sexual violence in areas of conflict

-Of the failure of the international community to resolve the on-going civil war and humanitarian crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic which has now entered into its 5th year

-That the humanitarian needs in the Syrian crisis have increased at more than 6 times the rate of funding with the international community having been able to raise only 47% of the $2.28 Billion requested by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

-That 10 years since the establishment of the Responsibility to Protect principle the international community remains paralyzed in preventing and eliminating crimes against humanity due to lack of political will

Stressing on the fact that:

-The implementation and respect for international human rights treaties cannot be achieved without an adequate global response and on-going dialogue on the common challenges before the international community

-The dangerous expansion and rise of extremist ideological and terrorist groups like Boko Haram and Da-esh have posed a direct threat to regional and international peace and security

-There is an urgent need to avoid a lost generation and a negative spiral of despair and radicalization as a result of Da-esh terror operations in Syria and Iraq

-The rise of violence in the Middle East cannot be fought without an adequate regional response and capacity building from within

-Safe channels of communication in areas of conflict are the only way of addressing the humanitarian needs of all those affected

-Humanitarian assistance in areas of conflict has become more and more politicized

-There is an urgent need for a long term strategy for reintegration of displaced Syrian refugees and victims of the terror organisation Da-esh

- Prosperous and democratic neighbors would be to Russia's advantage and not to its disadvantage and therefore the evolution of a mature relationship between Ukraine and Russia as sovereign states are undoubtedly good for both

Recalling:

-Its World Today Resolution to the 59th Congress in Rotterdam, the Netherlands which called for more legal and safe ways for Syrian refugees to enter the European Union as an alternative to irregular entry and the risks linked to human trafficking, stressing on the urgent need for more humanitarian protection

-Its oral statement to the 19th Session of the UNHRC and its written statement to the 24th Session of the UNHRC on the civil war in Syria which condemned the brutal actions of the Syrian authorities and it urged the Human Rights Council to recommend to the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court

-Its direct exchange with UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees His Excellency Thomas Alexander Aleinikoff at the UN Human Rights Council in May 2013 where Liberal International reaffirmed its commitment to continue to act as a link between liberal parliamentarians and the UN Refugee Agency in addressing humanitarian crises around the world

Calls:

- On the United Nations to attempt a political solution offering protection and participation of all Syrian groups in the future democratic political solution for Syria, based on democracy, human rights and the rule of law

-On the international community to prioritize humanitarian aid for Syrian refugees and all victims of the terror organisation Da-esh and step-up its financial support for host communities in neighbouring countries: notably Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey

-On the international community – especially the European Union - to support Ukraine's on-going efforts for a democratic transformation and economic modernization

-On the Russian government to adhere to the Minsk II peace agreement as proposed by Germany and France and as agreed with Ukraine on 12 February 2015

-On the Russian government to implement the conditions of the peace roadmap by ceasing immediately any military and financial support to the pro-Russian military separatists in Eastern Ukraine and by refraining from any further threats and/or military force

-On the Syrian Arab Republic and all other parties to the conflict to allow for immediate and full humanitarian access to all communities in need

-On developed nations to provide protection and asylum to a significantly higher number of Syrian refugees as a matter of first priority

-On the Government of Iraq, Iraq's neighbours, and the international community to continue to work towards a de-escalation of tensions and armed conflicts in Iraq's Western provinces and all provinces controlled by Da-esh

- On the Arab League to step up its efforts to end armed conflicts and violence in the Middle East

- On the Nigerian government to step up the efforts in neutralizing Boko Haram in a joint effort with its neighbouring countries and ensuring for a peaceful and democratic electoral process in the upcoming Presidential elections. The African Union should back this forcefully

- On the Venezuelan government to honour its international obligations and immediately repeal the new military tactics law targeting peaceful domestic demonstrations as the right to freedom of speech, including the right of citizens to participate in public demonstrations, is clearly enshrined in and protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a signatory

Commits:

-For liberal parliamentarians from around the world, whether in government or opposition, to continue to work towards the strengthening of international democratic standards and human rights principles as to tackle atrocities and crimes against humanity

-For liberal parliamentarians from around the world to continue to advocate for additional financial funding by the international community in order to secure much needed humanitarian assistance